(b) The strategies proposed for achieving the above targets include expansion of irrigated area, increasing area under high yielding varieties of rice and multiple cropping, farm mechanization, increasing fertilizer consumption, increasing productivity of fruits and vegetables and development of homestead garden.

(c) An outlay of Rs. 298.70 crores has been proposed under Agriculture sector for 10th Plan period.

MSP of Agricultural Commodities

†1363. SHRI BALKAVI BAIRAGI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it has been demanded by Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttaranchal, Chhattisgarh and Uttar Pradesh that support price for agricultural produce may be announced one crop in advance;

(b) if so, the action taken by Government on this demand from States;

(c) whether Government will take action for announcing support price one crop in advance this year as per the demand from the States; and

(d) if so, by when and the details thereof State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) to (d) No, Sir. However, all efforts are made to announce the Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) of major agricultural commodities at the earliest before the sowing season. The MSPs announced by the Government are uniform all over the country.

Use of fly ash in Farming

1364. DR. AKHILESH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Punjab Rao Deshmukh Krishi Vidyapeeth has successfully conducted an experiment to use fly ash for increasing crop yield;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, the details of the experiment, how and how much fly ash is to be used per acre of Crop area, and what has been the precise result of the experiment; and

(c) the steps taken and being taken to popularise use of fly ash in farming?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir. Dr. P.D.K.V. Akola has conducted experiments at the College of Agriculture, Nagpur on the use of fly ash for increasing crop yields.

(b) Thirty two field experiments for four years on ten crops have revealed increase in the crop yields, especially on Vertisols and inceptisols. The addition of fly ash has been recommended @ 4 t/acre (10 t/ha).

(c) Based on the encouraging results, the University has conducted about 433 demonstrations on cultivators' fields.

Identification of drought genes

1365. MISS MABEL REBELLO:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a new drought genes in chick-pea has been identified;

(b) whether it is grown in semi-arid areas in the country and can withstand the drought by producing double the amount of protein to compensate the shortage of water in dry area;

(c) whether such genes are also present in other plants; how far these have been tried in the drought-hit zones; and

(d) whether it is proposed to transfer these genes to other plants, if so, the details thereof and how far it has proved successful?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) No specific drought gene has been identified in chickpea.